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Position Statement on Sexual Fantasy

To: Office of The Federal Public Defenders

From: Bowman Smelko, Psy.D, ABPP
Licensed Psychologist
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DATE: February 2, 2018

RE: Position statement

Identifying Information

Mr. Vann Arvanetes contacted me for consultation regarding my professional knowledge and known research regarding sexual fantasy. The following document I have authored is not intended to be an evaluation of a specific individual, nor is it for the purpose of profiling. In no way should this be deemed a culpability assessment or forensic interview.

Referral Question/Presenting Problem

Mr. Vann Arvanetes was concerned the Trier of fact may not have knowledge of the range of sexual fantasies individuals from the general population seek on the internet, nor that the act of fantasy is widely engaged in while online. The current commentary addresses this topic.

Commentary on Sexual Fantasy

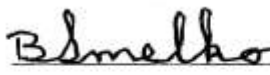
Each individual, regardless of race, gender, or ethnicity, has unique sexual fantasies. These fantasies are often private and not shared with even close family or friends. In the United States, openly sharing sexual fantasies

can lead to judgment and shame by those we care about as this topic is not openly talked about and many have no idea what others also fantasize about and what is abnormal. In addition, many individuals fantasize about sexual activity they would not carry out in everyday life. For example, it is not uncommon for females to have erotic fantasies that involve activity that could be illegal in a different context and to enact the fantasies with adult partners. See, for example, the article titled "Women's erotic rape fantasies: an evaluation of theory and research." As stated in the abstract, "This article is the first systematic review of the research literature on women's rape fantasies. Current research indicates that between 31% and 57% of women have fantasies in which they are forced into sex against their will, and for 9% to 17% of women these are a frequent or favorite fantasy experiences."

Further, "A Billion Wicked Thoughts: What the World's Largest Experiment Reveals about Human Desire" noted two neuroscientists used the world's largest data base-the Internet-to study the private activities of millions of men and women around the world, unveiling a revolutionary and shocking new vision of human desire that overturns conventional thinking.

During the course of studying roughly 1/2 of a billion internet searches for pornography (both pictures and written word) online the neuroscientists found the most popular search was for "Youth"! This accounted for 13.5 % of all searches. Other popular search items found were "transsexuals" which was the 17th most frequently searched item and "Shemale porn" which is deemed by the adult industry as internationally popular and profitable despite mainstream society finding this interest strange. The authors point out and reinforce what I have seen for many years of treating sexual offenders and specifically those offenders who are caught looking at child pornography online yet have not ever physically touched a youth (as confirmed through polygraph data). The authors conclude society and the expectations of societal norms usually control individual expression of behavior through the checks and balances of social pressure, yet the internet provides an environment for individuals to live out their fantasy.

In short, the range of human sexual desire and fantasy is endless. With that said, after 550 million searches were studied it was found that upwards of 80% of those searches could be lumped into under 25 categories. This suggests three things. The first is that individuals use the internet as a place to explore sexual desires (those that are sexually accepted and those that they believe would not be). The second is that many people who seek out sexually deviant material do not live out these fantasies in real life as they are controlled by their social conscience. In addition, many (falsely) believe they have anonymity while online. And lastly, despite many of the searches being taboo in society, most were consistently the same, suggesting humans in general may have many common taboo interests which are not openly discussed.

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